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**NOAA GRANTS FUNDS TO READING MUSEUM AND PARTNERS
TO CONDUCT DAM REMOVAL AND STREAM RESTORATION ON
WYOMISSING CREEK**

Federal officials, local leaders and community partners in Reading, Pa. today celebrated a successful effort to restore more than a quarter mile of Wyomissing Creek and surrounding habitat. NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Dr. Timothy Keeney, assistant secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere, toured the restoration site and praised the effort saying, "The citizens of Reading have a real feather in their caps today. They now have an improved environment and excellent community resource, and they can now be held up as a national example of conservation working on a local level. I am proud that NOAA can be associated with such a wonderful group of partners and with a project that benefits citizens at the local level."

The project, supported by a \$50,000 grant from NOAA's Community-based Restoration program, included the removal of two derelict dams blocking the creek and the restoration of natural habitat. "On Wyomissing Creek, we can share with our children the works of our ancestors and the times that they lived in," said Ann Mills, executive vice president for American Rivers. "Before long, we will share the experience of watching magnificent fish spawning in the streams of their ancestors."

In addition, museum visitors will now enjoy improved park infrastructure, enhanced educational opportunities and a rejuvenated natural area for outdoor recreation. Peter Poncheri, director of buildings and grounds for the museum comments, "This project would not be possible without the unwavering support and cooperation of federal, state and county regulatory agencies. Also notable are the valuable contributions of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and the financial support of the Pennsylvania Growing Greener Program, NOAA and various other non-profit environmental groups."

Since 1996, NOAA has provided over \$33 million for nearly 900 projects around the nation through the Community-based Restoration Program (CRP) for such projects as dam removal, fish passage improvements, and coastal wetland restoration. In addition to the Wyomissing project, CRP has completed many other dam removal and anadromous fish habitat restoration projects in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. Two additional dam removal projects in Pennsylvania and New Jersey are scheduled for completion this fall.

The NOAA Restoration Center uses a community-based restoration program to work with organizations and governments to support locally driven habitat restoration projects in marine, estuarine and riparian areas. NOAA funds on-the-ground habitat restoration projects that offer educational and social benefits for citizens and their communities and provide long-term ecological benefits for fishery resources. To date, projects have been implemented in 26 states using NOAA funding and leveraged funding from national and regional habitat restoration partners.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA's Community-based Restoration Program:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>